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SERMON

Preach'd before the

LORDS Spiritual and Temporal,
In Parliament Assembled,

IN THE

Abby-Church at Westminster,

On the 30th Day of January, 170^o.

BEFORE THE

Day of the Martyrdom of
KING CHARLES the Ist.

By WILLIAM, Lord Bishop of St. ASAPH.

ACTS XXII. 20.

*And when the Blood of thy Martyr Stephen was
shed, I also was standing by, and consenting to
his Death, and kept the Raiment of them that
slew him.*

L O N D O N,

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Water-side, for the benefit of the Poor.

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A C T S XXII. 20.

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THE Opposition which the Christian Religion met with, when it was first Planted upon Earth, was so far from hindering its taking Root, as was designed, that it made it grow more, and spread wider than otherwise it would have done. For the Apostles and First Disciples of Christ, being forced to flee from their Native Country, carried the Gospel along with them, and Preached it where-soever they came, with that undaunted Courage and Resolution, with that invincible Patience and Constancy, that their very Enemies could not but admire it, and acknowledge that they could never have done and suffered so much as they did, without extraordinary and supernatural Assistance from God himself: Who gave sufficient Testimony to the Truth of what they taught, by enabling them not only to work Miracles for the Confirmation of it, but to Seal it too with their own Blood: As both the Apostles and many other Disciples did. Which were therefore called *Martyrs*, that is Witnesses for Christ, and his Gospel, because they had attested the Truth and Certainty of what he had there taught in the highest manner that Creatures could do it, even by laying down their Lives in the Defence of it, which was so full an Evidence for the Excellency of the Christian Religion, that many were thereby brought over to the Embrace of it, and many who had before embraced it, were more fully Confirmed in it.

Wherefore the Church, to shew her Gratitude to those who had done her such eminent Service, and to encour-

encourage others to do the like, was wont to set apart those Days on which they suffered every Year, whereon to keep up the Memory of it. For which End, the appointed publick Notaries to observe and register the several Passages that occurred in any of their Sufferings: which were publickly read in their Congregations, upon the Days Dedicated every Year to their Memories; and therefore called by St. Cyprian, and others *Memoriae Martyrum*, as being the Days on which the Martyrs were Commemorated. Which, by reason of the great Number of Martyrs, were so many at last, that there was scarce a Day in the Year but some Martyr or other had Suffered, and therefore his Memory was Celebrated upon it.

Now our Church for many Reasons hath in a great Measure laid aside this Custom, observing no other Martyrs Days, but only those on which the Holy Apostles and Evangelists, and such as are recorded by them, Suffered. And as for all the rest, whether Saints, Martyrs, or Confessors, we Celebrate their Memories all together upon the First Day of *November*, therefore called *All-Saints Day*. Only our Late Most Gracious Sovereign, King *Charles the First*, having Suffered Death in our Days, for the sake of Christ, and his Church, this Day on which he Suffered it, is set apart for the Anniversary Commemoration of it, according to the fore-said Practice and Usage of the Primitive Church in the like Cases.

This therefore being the Reason of our Assembling here upon this Day, I have chosen the Words which I have now read concerning the First Martyr, *St. Stephen*, from whence, to Discourse briefly both of Martyrdom in general, and of that in particular which we this Day Celebrate. Which howsoever it may be at other times, cannot but be very seasonable at this.

The Occasion of the Words was this; When *St. Stephen* was Stoned to Death for Preaching the Gospel of Christ, the Witnesses, which were always the first

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that threw Stones at him whom they accused, that they might do it more expeditiously, put off their upper Garments, and laid them [Act. 7. 58.] at a Young Man's Feet who stood by, whose Name was Saul, [Act. 8. 1.] who also was consenting to his Death. This Saul, otherwise called Paul, being a strict and zealous Pharisee, from that Time forward made great Havock of the Church, Persecuting all he could find that Believed in the Lord Jesus. Till going to *Damascus* for that Purpose, he was miraculous converted by our Lord himself appearing to him. After which he became as great a Preacher of the Gospel, as he had been before a Persecutor. And being come back to *Jerusalem*, while he was Praying in the Temple, he fell into a Trance, and saw our Lord again coming to him, and saying, *Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy Testimony concerning me*; [Act. 22. 18.] which Words were no sooner spoken by our Lord, but Saul presently called his former Sins to Remembrance, and made an humble Confession of them to him. First in general, saying, *Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every Synagogue them that believed on thee*; [Act. 22. 19.] and then the particular Sin that he was guilty of as to the Matter of St. Stephen, *And when the blood, saith he, of thy Martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting to his Death, and kept the Raiment of them that slew him.* Where he confesseth himself to have been accessary to that horrid Sin, and reckoneth up the several Circumstances that made him so.

That I may adjust therefore my Discourse both to my Text, and to the Occasion of our present Meeting together, it will be necessary to Consider, what it is properly to be a *Martyr*, such as St. Stephen was, and how it appears that King *Charles* the First was such a one: And then it will be easie to shew how this Day is to be kept in Memory of him.

There are Two Things to be Considered in a *Martyr*, the Cause for which he Suffers, and what he Suffers

fers for that Cause. For although, according to St. *Augustine's* Observation, it is not the Sufferings but the Cause that makes the Martyr, yet seeing no Man can be made a Martyr, without Suffering, that must be Considered as well as the Cause, in our searching after the true Notion of a Martyr.

The Cause for which St. *Stephen* was called a Martyr, is intimated in my Text it self, where the Apostle saith, *And when the Blood of thy Martyr Stephen was shed. Thy Martyr*, that is, *Christ's*, to whom he spake the Words. And whosoever is not *Christ's* Martyr as he was, is no Martyr at all in the Opinion of true Christians. For a Martyr in the Christian Notion of the Word, is one that Suffers only upon the Account of *Christ*, so as to Testifie by his Sufferings the Truth and Excellency of that Doctrine and Discipline which *Christ* in his Holy Gospel hath taught and delivereth to Mankind. Such a one may be properly said to be a Martyr, or Witness for *Christ*, because it is for his sake only that he suffers; According to what *Christ* himself said, *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.* [Mat. 5. 21.] And therefore when the Apostles were Persecuted for Preaching the Gospel of *Christ*, they looked upon themselves as so far his Witnesses to the World, and rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for his name. [Act. 5. 41.] As St. *Peter* also expresth it, where he saith, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.* [1 Pet. 4. 15.]

But none can be truly said to Suffer for the sake, or for the name of *Christ*, but they who sincerely Profess, and patiently suffer for that Religion which he hath revealed to the World. Either for the whole, as the Apostles did, or else for some essential Part of it: in Defence of some Fundamental Article of the Faith which he hath taught, or else in Obedience to some of those necessary Commandments that he hath given us. As many of the Primitive Christians suffered Death, rather than they would Sacrifice or Burn Incense to Idols, be-

cause that was plainly contrary to the Precepts of the Christian Religion. And therefore they were properly Martyrs for *Christ*. And so were they in Queen *Mary's* Days, who chose to Suffer Death, rather than Worship Images, Pray to Saints Departed, or do any thing that was contrary to the Doctrine or Precepts of the Gospel.

For whosoever thus resolutely Contends for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints, so as to set himself in good earnest to Believe and Obey the Gospel of *Christ*, whatsoever it costs him, and patiently undergoes any Punishment, and Death it self, rather than deny the Faith, or break any of the Commandments of *Christ*, such a one doth thereby most effectually declare and testify to the World, that he is fully perswaded in his Judgment and Conscience, that whatsoever *Christ* said, is really true, and whatsoever he commanded is really just and good, and necessary to be observed, and therefore such a one is properly *Christ's* Martyr, and ought to be esteemed as such.

From whence we may likewise observe, what Suffering is necessary to the making a Martyr: nothing less than Death. I do not deny but that they who Suffer in their Names, Bodies or Estates, so as to be reproached, imprisoned, banished, stript of all they have, maimed in their Bodies, tortured upon Wracks, and the like, and all for the sake of *Christ*, and his Religion, such are so far Witnesses for *Christ*, and do him great Service, for which they will have a proportionable reward. But such are not properly called *Martyrs*, but *Confessors*; the Title of *Martyrs* having been always appropriated to those who actually suffer some kind of Death for *Christ*, as *St. Stephen* did. And how much soever any Suffered, unless it came at last to a violent Death, we do not find that their Memories were publicly Celebrated, as the *Martyrs* were.

But whatsoever kind of Death, any underwent for *Christ's* sake, it always Entitled them to the Name and Crown of Martyrdom. As what Death was there, but some

some of the Apostles or Primitive Christians underwent it ? Some were Stoned, some Hanged upon Gibbets, some Crucified, some Burnt, some Flead Alive, some were Beaten to Death with Clubs, some had their Entrails taken out, some had their Flesh torn off with Pincers, some were thrown into the Sea, and some to Wild Beasts, some were Starved to Death, and others had their Limbs plucked asunder with Horses, or Branches of Trees distorted. In short, there is scarce any sort of violent and cruel Death, that the wit and malice of Men or Devils could invent, but some of the Ancient Christians Suffered it for their Master's Sake ; One of the mildest was Beheading. Thus Died St. *James*, the Apostle, and *Justin Martyr* ; thus Died St. *Cyprian*, and many others, who had their Heads Chop'd off, as St. *John* the Baptist's was ; and thus Died King *CHARLES the Martyr*, whose Memory we this Day Celebrate.

We may call Him a *Martyr*, for he is so called by the King, and the Three Estates of the Realm in Parliament, as well as by the whole *Church of England* in Convocation Assembled : For in the Kalendar before our *Common-Prayer Book*, over against this Day is set, *King Charles Martyr* : And in the Table of certain Solemn Days for which particular Services are Appointed, the Thirtieth of *January* is said to be, *The Day of the Martyrdom of King Charles the First* : And in the Service it self, He is called, *Our late Martyr'd Sovereign* : And, *God's Blessed Martyr*. Wherefore having such a cloud of Witnesses for it, we cannot doubt but that He was a *Martyr* : For none can deny that, without Arraigning the Wisdom and Piety both of our Church and Nation. But howsoever, it may not be amiss if we briefly Consider how He came to be so. And the Case, in short, was this.

The grand Adversary of Mankind, the Devil, having ever since the *Reformation* been Plotting and contriving to Undermine and so to Overthrow the Church of *Christ* Established among us, sometimes by Papists, at other times by Sectaries, and still failing in his At-

tempts upon it, at last he used this Stratagem : He by his Emissaries possessed the People with an Opinion, false as himself, that the Church was not sufficiently Reformed, not pure enough : And that there was no way to Reform it thoroughly, but by Destroying the Discipline and Government of it by Bishops : As well knowing that if this was once effected, his work would be done : For then all manner of Heresy and Errour, Schism and Sedition, Profaness, Immorality, and Atheism it self would come in of course. As we find it did by woful experience.

But although he insinuated this absurd conceit into some unwary People, such especially as God had given up to vile affections, and had sent them strong delusions thay they should believe a Lye, yet there were many in the Nation that would never hearken to such a false Suggestion ; Especially the King himself, being a Man of more than ordinary Learning and Piety, He was so far above the reach of such Temptations, that he would never hearken to any Proposals of that nature ; whereupon the old Serpent insinuated himself so far into a great part of the Nation, as to stir them up to join in an unnatural War against their Prince ; hoping by that means to bring him into such straits, that He must either consent to the Destruction of the Church, or lose his Life. And he hoped now to make good that Maxim, which failed him before in *Job's Case, Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life.* [Job 2. 4.] And his Policy so far prevailed, that the King was reduced to such straits, that he must part either with his Religion or his Life.

For his Rebelious Subjects having got Him into their Hands, demanded of Him to Consent to the Selling and Alienating the Revenues of the Church, and to the Abolishing and laying aside the Government of it by Bishops, as now by Law Established, according to the Institution of *Christ* and his Apostles. And if He would not consent to the destruction of the Church, according

to those propositions, He could expect no other but to be destroyed Himself. A sad Dilemma. But the good King bore up under it with that Courage as became a Christian, and One who would rather Sacrifice his Life than his Conscience to them: For when these among other Propositions were sent to Him, he consulted not with Flesh and Blood, but made this solemn Vow and Resolution, still extant in his Meditations upon this Subject, [*EIK B&C* p. 86. Ed. 1648.] *I will never, saith he, consent to more than Reason, Justice, Honour and Religion persuade me to be for God's Glory, the Church's Good, my Peoples Welfare, and my own Peace.* A most Christian Resolution, which He strictly performed to the last.

And therefore in the Message which He sent from the Isle of Wight to the Members at Westminster, He told them plainly, that as to the Abolishing of Archbishops and Bishops, He could not Consent to it, as He was a Christian and a King; first, as a Christian, *being satisfied in his judgment, that this Order was placed in the Church by the Apostles themselves, and that ever since that time, it had continued in all Christian Churches throughout the World, till this last Century of Years. And in this Church in all times of Change and Reformation it had been upheld by the wisdom of his Ancestors, as the great preserver of doctrine, discipline and order in the Service of God.* Next, as a King, at his Coronation, that he had not only taken a solemn Oath, but that himself and his Predecessors in their Confirmation of the great Charter, had inseparably woven the Rights of the Church into the Liberties of the rest of the Subjects. And as to the Alienation of the Church Lands, He told them, that He could not consent to that, *it being a Sin of the highest Sacrilege.* (*Dugdal. short View of the Troubles.* p. 268.)

From whence it appears, that He was fully convinced in his Judgment and Conscience, that He could not Consent to what was demanded of him without robbing God, and forswearing himself. And therefore in his Divine Meditations, he breaks forth into this remarkable Expression, (*EIK B&C* p. 161. Edit. 1648.) *How can any Man that wisbeth not my damnation, persuade me at once to so notorious and combined Sins of Sacrilege and Perjury.*

Now considering that his not consenting to the Destruction of Christ's Church, Established in his Kingdom, and to the Alienation of the Revenues belonging to it, was the great cause wherefore he suffered: and considering that the reason why He could not consent to those Propositions, was, because He would not transgress Christ's Laws, nor dishonour his Holy Name and his Religion, by those horrid Sins of Sacrilege and Perjury: Hence it is plain and manifest, that it was not his own but Christ's Cause in which He suffered, and that He Dying for that Cause did thereby most clearly demonstrate to the World, that He preferred the Christian Religion before his own Life.

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Life, and chose rather to suffer Death than to destroy the Government which *Christ* had settled in his Church, or take away the Revenues which were given to his Service, or to Forswear Himself contrary to his Laws. And by necessary consequence, that He was in a proper sense, his Martyr, as *St. Stephen* is here said to be.

From hence we may see into some of the Grounds upon which King *CHARLES* was so solemnly declared a *Martyr*, and a standing Law made for the Anniversary Observation of the Day on which he Suffered. It is in Obedience to that Law that we are now Assembled upon this Day. And therefore it may be proper to consider how it ought to be observed.

If King *CHARLES* had Died in the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, and had Suffered Martyrdom for that, as He did for the Church of *England*, He would have been Canonized long ago by the Pope, and would have had Religious Worship performed to Him ever after, at least upon this Day. But we have not so learned *Christ*. But as the Church of *Smyrna* in the Martyrdom of *Polycarp*, contemporary with the Apostles, saith, *Christ we worship as the Son of God. And as for Martyrs, his Disciples and followers, we deservedly love and honour them for their eminent kindness to our Lord and Master, desiring to be their Companions and Fellow-Disciples.* Thus did the Primitive, and thus doth our Church Celebrate the Memories of the *Martyrs*: Not by Praying or performing to them any sort of Worship, that is due only to God: But by praising God for them, and Praying to Him, that we may be such as they were. But there being something particular in this which is not in the Days of other Martyrs, it is requisite that there be something particular also in the Observation of it.

What that is we may best learn from the Act or Statute that was made for it. Wherein the Lords and Commons in Parliament Assembled, say to the King, *We do hereby Renounce, Abominate and Protest against that impious Fact, the execrable Murder, and most unparall'd Treason committed against the Sacred Person and Life of Our Late Sovereign, Your Majesty's Most Royal Father, and all Proceedings tending thereunto.* And therefore they afterwards desire that it may be Enacted, and it was accordingly Enacted, That Every Thirtieth Day of January, unless it falls out upon the Lord's Day, and then the next Day following, shall be for ever hereafter set apart to be kept and observed in all Churches and Chapels of these Your Majesty's Kingdoms, &c. as an Anniversary Day of Fasting and Humiliation, to Implore the Mercy of GOD, that neither the Guilt of that Sacred and Innocent Blood, nor those other Sins by which GOD was provoked to deliver up both Us and our King into the Hands of cruel and unreasonable Men, may at any time

time hereafter be visited upon Us, or our Posterity.

Where we may first observe, That they then Agreed and solemnly Declare, That the putting King *CHARLES* to Death, was Murder, *An execrable Murder.* And so certainly it was, Murder aggravated with such dismal Circumstances, that our Ears may justly tingle, and our Hearts tremble at the Hearing of it. A King Murdered ! A Pious, a Vertuous, a Most Christian King Murdered ! *CHARLES, King of Great Britain*, Murdered ! Murdered by his own Subjects, by *Englishmen* ! Formally, deliberately, publickly Murdered in the Face of the *Sun*, before his own Royal Palace : and all because he would not forswear Himself, rob *G O D*, and destroy the Church which *C H R I S T* had committed to his Protection and Care. And all this too, I dread to speak it, all this under the Pretence of Justice and Religion ; the Christian, the Protestant Religion. Who can think of it, without Horrour and Detestation ? None surely but such, whose Hearts are as hard, as their's who did it.

All others cannot but be touched to the quick at each Remembrance of it, and would humble themselves under the Almighty Hand of *G O D* for it, altho' there was no Law to oblige them to it : Much more now there is one. A Law that requires that this Day be kept every Year all the Kingdom over, as a Day of Fasting and Humiliation, to Implore the Mercy of *G O D* in the Pardon of that Execrable Murder, and the other Sins, whereby *G O D* was provoked to suffer that to be done, and to lay such heavy Judgments as he then did upon the Nation, that the Guilt thereof may not be charged upon the People of this Land, which we accordingly do in the *Form of Prayer* appointed for this Day. And therefore I need not insist upon it ; but only wish that the Confessions and Prayers which we make to *G O D* upon this mournful Ocasion, may all come from the Bottom of our Hearts, and go up to Heaven accompanied with such Godly Sorrow and Faith in *C H R I S T*, that for his sake we may obtain the Mercy we pray for.

But to manifest the Sincerity of our Grief and Sorrow for what was then done, we must for the future abhor and avoid,
not

not only such wicked Practices themselves, but all Occasions of them. We must take heed that we be not seduced into Heresy, Schism or Sedition, neither run into Parties or Factions among our selves: nor in any of the Ways that commonly tend towards them; such especially as led to the Martyrdom of King *CHARLES*, as they had before to that of *St. Stephen*. Of whom it is written [*Act. 6. 11. 12.*] *that they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the People, and the Elders, and the Scribes against him.* So it was here. Wicked and designing Men, the better to cover and carry on their wicked Designs, contrived all the ways they could to asperse the King as well as the Church, giving it out among the People, and making them believe that their Laws and Liberties were in danger, and their Religion too. And it must be confessed, that the True Religion Established in the Kingdom, was then in Danger: but it was so from themselves, not from the King, who did what he could to defend it, and to defend it from them. But howsoever, by this means they *stirred up the People*, to rise in open Rebellion against their Sovereign, which by several Steps and Degrees advanced Him at last to the Crown of *Martyrdom*. From whence we should all take warning, never to give Ear to any ill Reports that are spread abroad of the Government under which we Live; nor entertain, much less disperse any groundless Fears and Jealousies of the publick Administration. For if Credulous People should be once possessed with them, we know not how far they may run beyond the Bounds of Duty and Allegiance, into Treason, Rebellion, and Murder it self.

It is the Duty of all Subjects, to be always subjects to the Higher Powers, [*Rom. 13. 5.*] *not only for wrath, but conscience sake*; to study to be quiet, and to mind every one his own Business, leaving the Government of the Church and State, to those to whom the Universal Governor of the World hath committed it: And whatsoever happens, still continue stedfast and unmoveable in our Duty to *GOD*, and for his sake, to those which he hath set over us. For which Purpose it is

very expedient and of great Use, that *This Day* be Religiously observed every Year, that People may be often put in mind both of the Greatness of the Sin of Rebellion, and likewise of the Dreadful Consequences of it. Of which, we have but too sad an Instance, in that which we this *Day* lament and mourn for.

But in the midst of our Lamentation and Mourning, we must remember also to give Thanks to *G O D*, for his special Grace and favour to our Late *Martyred Sovereign*, and in Him to this whole Kingdom. Particularly for the manifold Graces and Vertues, that shined so gloriously in Him, both all his Life, and at his Death. When he Forgave and Prayed for his very Murderers, as the *First Martyr* did, after the Divine Example of our *Blessed Redeemer*. But these Things are so well known, and so well expressed in the Service for the *Day*, that I need not enlarge upon them.

That which ought more specially to be observed, is, the wonderful Providence of *G O D*, in making this *Martyred Prince* and his Family, the great Instruments of Defending, Restoring, Delivering and Upholding our Happy Constitution in Church as well as State. He Himself both Lived and Died in the Defence of it. When, for the Sins of the Nation, it was broken in pieces, so that scarce any one Part of it was visible among us for some Years, *G O D* sent the *Blessed Martyr's* Son to restore it. His Daughter's Son to Deliver, it when it was again in extreme Danger: and then His other Son's Daughter, Our Most Gracious *SOVEREIGN*, to keep it as He left it, in Peace and Safety. Whom we have therefore infinite Cause to Praise *G O D* for, and to Love and Honour, as being a Branch of that *Royal Stock*, that was cut down for Supporting Our Church: Much more as Inheriting His Vertues as well as Kingdoms: As in other Respects, so in Relation also to Our Church; She being as Constant an Attendant at the *Daily Prayers*, as frequent a Communicant at the Altar, as strict and an Observer of the Orders, and as much concerned for the Peace and Welfare of it, as her Grand-father, of Ever Blessed Memory was. To which we may add Her *Royal Bounty* for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the

the *Poorer Clergy*, in which She exceeds all that went before Her. From all which we may well Conclude, that altho' Our Church be always in Danger from the many Enemies wherewith it is encompassed, yet we have no Cause, to fear, but that by GOD's Grace and Blessing upon Her *Majesty's* Care and Conduct, She will Preserve, Defend and Uphold it, in Spight of all the Powers of Hell, through the whole Course of Her Reign : Which I heartily wish may be the Longest that ever any King or Queen Reigned in this or any other Kingdom upon Earth.

But how long soever it shall be, there will be a Time for Her to leave Her Earthly Crown for one in Heaven. And whether it will please GOD that She shall leave it to the Issue of Her Own Royal Body, He only knows. But this we know, that He of His great Goodness hath still in Reserve a Numerous Off-spring of His *Martyr's* Royal Sister, in the Illustrious House of *Hanover*, every way qualified to Succeed, if there should be Occasion. And we must acknowledge it to be a great Happiness, to have always one of that Royal Family to Reign over us, which hath hitherto been so great a Blessing to this Church and Kingdom, and we hope will be so to the End of the World.

Among the many great Blessings that we have received fromthence, One of the most remarkable, and that which is the great Glory of our Church, is, that so great a Prince gave such a Testimony to it, as was never given to any National Church besides, and Sealed it wit his own Blood, before many Thousand Witneses which stood by, as *Saul* did at the Martyrdom of *St. Stephen*.

There are none I suppose here present, that *stood by* when King *Charles* was Murdered; and I hope none that ever consented to it, but that we can truly say, as the *Lords* and *Commons* did in the *Act* before-mentioned, that *We Renouce, Abominate, and Protest against that impious Fact*. This is the least we can do to Preserve our selves from the Guilt of that Sacred and Innocent Blood. But that it may not only cease to be a Curse, but also become a Blessing to us, he must now set an higher Value upon the Church for which it was shed,

shed, and labour more abundantly to adorn it, as this Holy *Martyr* did, with Vertue and Works.

In the First Ages of Christianity it was observed, that *the Blood of Martyrs was the Seed of the Church*; that whereby it increased and Multiplied. *GOD* grant that the Blood of this *Royal Martyr* may have the same Effect among us. That they who are not of our Communion, may be prevailed upon to come into it; and they who are, may be more Confirmed in it, by the Testimony and Example of this great Monarch, who holding constant Communion with our Church, by *GOD's* Blessing upon the means there used, was, like Saint Stephen, [*Acts* 6. 5.] a Man full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost, so as to be able to prefer his Duty to *GOD*, before all his Kingdoms and Dominions, his Liberty, and his Life too. This was to be a Christian, this was to be a Saint indeed. And such we may all be, if we will but take the same course, as He did; for it, by keeping close to the Communion of our Church in all points.

For this was the great End, wherefore the Eternal Son of *GOD* Purchased to Himself an Universal Church with his own Blood, and by his Almighty Power still continues it upon Earth, that Men being fallen into a state of Sin, might there be Sanctified, or made Holy again, to the Praise and Glory of *GOD*. For which end He hath Instituted in it several Offices, Sacraments, and other Ordinances, to be the means whereby we may all receive of his fulness, and Grace for Grace: [*Job*. 1. 16.] Called therefore the means of Grace. To which He hath also added [*2 Pet.* 1. 4.] exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these we might be partakers of the Divine Nature. [*1 Pet.* 1. 15.] Holy, as he who hath called us is holy in all manner of conversation. As many Thousands have found by Experience, who once were sinful Mortals upon Earth, as we at present are, but now are glorified Saints in Heaven. But they were first made Saints upon Earth. And why may not we be made so, as well as they? We especially, who live in that part of the Holy Catholick Church, where the foresaid means of Grace as regularly, as constantly, and as powerful Administred, to speak with the least,

as in any place upon the face of the whole Earth. So that it is our own Faults, and we blame none but our selves for it, if we be not as great Saints as ever lived. For if we be not failing to our selves in the Use, we cannot fail of the End of those holy Institutions.

Wherefore, Beloved in the Lord, let us now resolve in the Name of *C H R I S T*, that we will no longer content our selves with the bare Profession of our holy Religion, nor with doing only some things which our Church requires, nor yet with pretending and talking high for it ; but that we will do all we can, as this Blessed *Martyr* did, to live up to the height of it. Stedfastly believing all that's there taught, and constantly exercising our selves in all, and every one of the means of Grace, which are there either administered or perscribed, trusting always in *G O D* for his Assistance and Blessing upon what we do. And let us never think that we do all we ought, or as we ought to do it, till we find our Passions subdued, and our whole Man restored to a right frame and temper again ; till our Hearts be wholly inclined to *G O D*, and set to obey his Laws and to do all such good Works as he hath prepared for us to walk in : till, after the Example of the Saints and Martyrs, and all the faithful Servants of the most High *G O D*, we can live above this world, and have our conversation always in Heaven, where our great Lord and Master is. Then we shall think nothing too great to do, nothing too much to suffer for his sake. But if all the Kingdoms upon Earth were ours, we should be willing and ready to part with them all at once, rather than deny any one Article of our Christian Faith, or wilfully transgress any one of those holy Commandments, which the Supreme Law-giver of the World hath given us to observe, [*Heb. 12. 2.*] *Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God : Where He is continually interceding for all those who serve Him faithfully upon Earth, that they may ever live with Him in Heaven, with Him, who Liveth and Reigneth with the Father and Ho'y Ghost, one God, Blessed for ever.*

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